October 23, 2020

Dear Temple Rome Spring 2021 Program Participant,

Ciao from Roma. We look forward to hosting you in Rome this coming spring semester. We’re sure you are aware that COVID-19 cases in the US. and in Europe have been increasing. We want to provide some updates.

After several months of stability of COVID-19 infection rates, Italy is seeing a marked increase in reported cases. As in the spring, the northern region of Lombardy is experiencing the largest number of cases. Unlike the first wave, the second rate has not produced similarly large numbers in hospitalizations and casualties with the majority of cases being in the age group under 40 and mostly asymptomatic or experiencing mild symptoms. We had been alerted to a likely increase in infection rates as students returned to school (which happened through the middle and end of September). Italy’s medical infrastructure has improved significantly since the first wave in March; since then, Italy has procured equipment, produced and distributed millions of masks and is conducting up to 160,000 tests per day.

We appreciate that this information may be of concern to you and your families, and want to assure you that we are monitoring this situation very carefully. At this time, we continue to plan for your arrival and hosting our spring 2021 semester and want to assure you we are prioritizing your health and safety.

We are in daily contact with Temple University leadership to discuss developments that might impact the program, and we are in touch with Italian government and local public health authorities to ensure that our facilities and plans for students are in compliance with the best practices and protocols available.

In response to the current surge in cases, the Italian government has instituted several measures designed to slow the spread of infection. These guidelines are outlined below. A summary is offered by the Ministry of Health.

- Italian schools and universities will pivot to online classes for some high school and university students until November 26th
- Rome has set a general curfew from midnight to 5 a.m.
- People must wear a face mask at all times and face coverings must be worn in all indoor and outdoor spaces, except within your home
- Restaurants remain open, but the size of parties is limited to 6 people
- Museums remain open (in fact, this week, many galleries in Rome, including TUR’s Gallery of Art, hosted Rome Art Week exhibitions)
- Groups and gatherings are limited to a maximum of 30 people
- Travel within Italy continues to be permitted
- Exercise and sports are allowed with the exception of contact sports
Life in Rome continues pretty normally. Across the city, restaurants and museums remain open, and much of daily life is rather routine - albeit people are masked and practicing social distancing. Rome and Romans are adapting to this situation.

While we can’t predict what the future will hold, we want to assure you and your families that Temple University Rome and Education Abroad will keep you informed of any significant changes that would impact our ability to deliver a safe and successful experience for our students.

We will update you as needed, or as information relevant to hosting you in Rome is available. In the meantime, please don’t hesitate to contact Education Abroad if you have any questions or concerns.

You can also stay informed by visiting the Italian Ministry of Health homepage, which includes a [COVID-19 dashboard](https://www.legambiamm.it/en/coronavirus).  

**Emilia Zankina**

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